

URGENT ACTION

PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AT RISK

On 10 April, at around 530 pm, an explosive device was found 5 meters away from the front door of the office of the Santander's (North) Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (CREDHOS in Spanish) According to the National Police, the explosive artefact was placed by the National Liberation Army (ELN in Spanish). On 11 April, while accompanying an administrative police procedure in the area known as "Finca El Hebron" in Barrancabermeja, staff members of CREDHOS were shot by armed civilians. We urge the president of Colombia to ensure the protection of CREDHOS.

Gustavo Petro
President of Colombia

Carrera 8 # 7-26
Palacio de Nariño
CP 111711
Bogotá, Colombia

Email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Dear Mr. Gustavo Petro

I am writing to express concern for the safety of the members of the Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (CREDHOS), an organization committed to the defence, promotion, and protection of human rights in the Magdalena Medio region since 1987.

In April, their members received at least 2 death threats and attacks, the latest on April 11th, when armed civilians attacked with weapons the staff members of CREDHOS that were accompanying an administrative police procedure in Barrancabermeja. On April 10th an explosive artefact was found five meters away from the office is CREDHOS

We urge you to provide CREDHOS and its staff with effective individual and collective protection, articulating the action of the ministers of Defence, Justice, the Interior, the National Protection Unit, and the high Commissioner for Peace for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (CREDHOS) was founded in 1987 in the city of Barrancabermeja. For more than thirty years, CREDHOS has worked for the defence, promotion, and protection of human rights, with its work extending to eight municipalities of the Magdalena Medio region of Colombia (North). In recent years, addressing socio-environmental conflicts in the region has gained great importance within the organization and CREDHOS started defending the communities' rights to a healthy environment.

Due to their work since their foundation, CREDHOS staff have been threatened, harassed, and killed. The latest security incidents faced by CREDHOS staff include:

- On 24 March 2021, CREDHOS received a threatening call from an unknown man self-identified as member of the Magdalena Medio Block of the armed group FARC- EP saying “stop making publications and being toadies, CREDHOS’ Staff is a military objective, you have 48 hours to leave Barrancabermeja”. Minutes later the President of CREDHOS received a threatening voice message. We urged authorities to fully guarantee their protection as per their collective reparation plan granted in 2016.
- On 10 February 2021, a confidential community source notified CREDHOS that armed groups have pointed at CREDHOS staff as military objective
- On 9 January 2021, a pamphlet signed by people identifying themselves as “The Magdalena Medio Block of the PAFC-EP” was circulating in social networks and instant messaging applications. The pamphlet orders a change in a report released by CREDHOS weeks earlier, that includes an analysis of the dynamic of armed groups and illegal economies in 2 subregions of Colombia: Southern Bolivar and the Northeast of Antioquia
- On 24 October 2020, unknown men broke into the apartment of Dr. Ivonne Suarez Pinzón, a member of CREDHOS' Board of Directors who is also the Director of the Oral Memory Archive of Victims of the Internal Armed Conflict (AMOVIIUIS), where documents of the cases presented by the organization before the “Special Jurisdiction for Peace” (JEP) were stored.
- On 1 September 2020, The Secretary of the Board of Directors of CHEDHOS Abelardo Sanchez, denounced to the Attorney General's that his house was watched by unknow men the night before.

In 2016, The Victims’ Reparation Unit recognized CREDHOS as a subject of collective reparation for the damages caused to it as an organization throughout its existence. The implementation of the measures officially started in March 2019. The Plan contemplates sixteen measures that will be applied at its Barrancabermeja main offices and in the eight municipalities that are impacted by CREDHOS’ work.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: CREDHOS (Them, They).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AMR2358712022ENGLISH.pdf>